

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 120236 TOSEC 010232

FOLLOWING REPEAT VIENTIANE 3618 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK
CANBERRA PARIS UDORN AND CINCPAC 22 MAY 75

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VIENTIANE 3618

CANBERRA FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB
CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, EAID, LA, US

SUBJ: REVIEW OF SITUATION WITH FONMIN PHOUMI VONGVICHIT

REF: STATE 119496

BEGIN SUMMARY. CHARGE CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER TO
REVIEW NUMBER OF ISSUES. CHARGE OPENED BY POINTING OUT
CONTRADICTION BETWEEN PGNU'S APPARENT DESIRE THAT AMERI-
CAN COMMUNITY BE REDUCED AND BARRIERS IT PUT IN WAY OF OUR
EFFORTS TO DO. CHARGE THEN WENT OVER SPECIFIC
PROBLEMS: A) ON NEW AIRCRAFT CLEARANCE PROCEDURES,
PHOUMI ASSURED HIM THESE WOULD NOT DELAY CLEARANCES;
B) ON CONTROL OF PERSONAL EFFECTS (SEIZING OF TRUCKS
BY PL AND JOINT POLICE CONTROLS AT KM 6) WHICH WERE
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IN VIOLATION OF VIENNA CONVENTION, PHOUMI ASSERTED THESE
WERE NOT A PROBLEM AND RESULTED FROM DEMONSTRATORS'
FEAR THAT OBJECTS BELONGING TO LAOS WOULD BE REMOVED.
JCCIA WOULD CHECK THESE TRUCKS AND LOOK INTO SITUATION

AT KM 6 TOO; C) ON SHIPPING OF PERSONNEL AIR FREIGHT, PHOUMI SAID THERE WOULD BE NO BARRIERS; AND D) ON CONTINUING USAID COMPOUND OCCUPATION, PHOUMI SAID PRIME MINISTER HAD TALKED TO DEMONSTRATORS BUT THEY HELD FIRM ON EARLY DISSOLUTION OF USAID. SOUVANNA HAD, THEREFORE, INSTRUCTED JCCIA CO-CHAIRMEN TO CONTINUE TO TRY TO FIND SOLUTION. PRIME MINISTER MADE CLEAR NO FORCE SHOULD BE USED AGAINST POPULATION.

PHOUMI CONTINUELY RETURNED TO THEME THAT IF PGNU COULD SAY USG AGREES IN PRINCIPLE, USAID WILL BE DISSOLVED, ALL ELSE WILL BE EASILY SOLVED. COMMUNIQUE TO THAT EFFECT WOULD CALM SITUATION. HE REVIEWED POINTS HE MADE TO RAMSEY AND CHARGE FOUR DAYS AGO AND CONCLUDED THAT IF USG COULD AGREE TO NEGOTIATE IN PRINCIPLE ON DISSOLUTION AND EXAMINATION OF 1951 AGREEMENT, THEN PGNU COMMISSION AND EMBASSY COULD MEET TO DISCUSS ISSUES INVOLVED; OTHERWISE THERE WAS NO PURPOSE IN MEETING. CHARGE RAISED SUBJECT OF INFLAMMATORY LAO NATIONAL RADIO BROADCASTS AND PHOUMI GAVE SOOTHING ANSWER.

CHARGE LATER CALLED SOTH PHETRASY TO ASCERTAIN WHAT HE WAS DOING REGARDING USAID COMPOUND. SOTH WENT OVER SAME GROUND AS PHOUMI. SOTH DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT. CHARGE SUGGESTED TO SOTH PGNU GIVE USG SPECIFIC PROPOSALS ON CHANGES IN 1951 AGREEMENT AND ON MODALITIES OF FUTURE AID SO USG COULD MAKE DECISION. END SUMMARY.

1. CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT AT 3:00 P.M. AT MY REQUEST TO GO OVER LARGE NUMBER WFLW PCGI. I WENT THROUGH MY LITANY AND HE TOOK NOTE. HE THEN ANSWERED EACH POINT AT A TIME.

2. I INTRODUCED CONVERSATION BY STATING THAT WE WERE FINDING OURSELVES IN INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT SITUATION. ON THE ONE HAND THE GOVERNMENT WAS MAKING CLEAR THAT IT WANTED THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY CONSIDERABLY REDUCED AND ON THE OTHER HAND SUDDENLY IT HAD ESTABLISHED NEW AND WIDE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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RANGING CONTROLS WHICH WERE IN CONTRAVENTION OF THE VIENNA CONVENTION AND WHICH DIRECTLY AFFECTED OUR ABILITY TO SEND AMERICANS OUT. I THEREFORE WANTED TO DISCUSS WITH HIM ALL THE QUESTIONS INVOLVED AND TO SEE WHETHER WE COULD PROCEED WITH OUR PRESENT PLANS WHICH CALLED FOR EVACUATION BY CHARTER AIRCRAFT OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS OR SO OF LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICANS.

3. AIRCRAFT CLEARANCE: THIS MORNING I WAS ADVISED, I SAID, THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME THE GOVERNMENT WAS REQUIRING DIPLOMATIC NOTES TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO OBTAIN CLEARANCES THAT HAD UNTIL NOW BEEN RECEIVED

ROUTINELY. HE CONFIRMED THAT INDEED THE MFA WANTED TO RECEIVE A NOTE IN ORDER TO CHECK CLEARANCES OUT WITH PUBLIC WORKS WHERE THE CIVIL AVIATION DIVISION IS LOCATED AND NATIONAL DEFENSE FOR SECURITY. HE ASSURED ME, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM IN OBTAINING EXPEDITED CLEARANCES.

4. CONTROL OF PERSONAL EFFECTS: I RECALLED THAT THE PL WERE STILL HOLDING FOUR TRUCKS CARRYING PERSONAL EFFECTS OF EMBASSY AND USAID EMPLOYEES. FURTHERMORE, AT THE KM 6 HOUSING COMPLEX THE JOINT POLICE ALSO CONTINUED TO CONTROL CARS AND PEOPLE MOVING IN AND OUT OF THE COMPOUND. I POINTED OUT THAT THIS ALSO WAS SERIOUS VIOLATION OF THE VIENNA CONVENTION. PHOUMI WAVED THIS WHOLE ISSUE ASIDE. HE SAID THERE IS NO QUESTION OF CONTROL IN VIOLATION OF THE CONVENTION. HOWEVER, THE DEMONSTRATORS FEEL THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO TAKE OBJECTS BELONGING TO THE LAO GOVERNMENT OUT OF LAOS, AND THEREFORE THEY WANTED TO CONTROL THE MOVEMENT OF ALL GOODS. HOWEVER, HE HAD LOCATED THE FOUR TRUCKS AT THE OFFICE OF THE MIXED POLICE WHICH HAD TAKEN THEM IN CHARGE BECAUSE "PEOPLE OF USAID" HAD TOLD POLICE THESE TRUCKS TRANSPORTED GOODS BELONGING TO USAID. HE HAD ASKED THE CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE JCCIA, SOTH PHETRASY AND SOUKAN VILAYSARN, TO CHECK WHETHER THESE TRUCKS CARRIED PERSONAL EFFECTS OR NOT. AS REGARDS THE CONTROL AT KM 6, THERE WAS NO QUESTION CHECKING BAGGAGES BUT HE WOULD ASK SOTH AND SOUKAN TO LOOK INTO THIS MATTER ALSO. I SAID THAT SOME SIXTY PEOPLE WOULD BE LEAVING THERE TOMORROW WITH BAGS TO LEAVE ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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CHARTER AND THAT IF THEY WERE SUBJECTED TO SEARCH, I WOULD ORDER THEM BACK TO COMPOUND AND WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER THEM PRISONERS. IN THE SAME CONTEXT, I SAID THAT I WANTED TO HAVE ASSURANCES THAT EMPLOYEES' AIR FREIGHT COULD BE SHIPPED WITHOUT CUSTOMS EXAMINATIONS OR OTHER UNNECESSARY FORMALITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH CUSTOMARY DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE. HE INDICATED THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEMS IN THIS REGARD.

5. USAID COMPOUND: I SAID THAT DESPITE CONVERSATIONS OVER THE LAST TWO DAYS DEMONSTRATORS WERE STILL HOLDING OUT IN THE COMPOUND, WHICH AGAIN WAS CONTRARY TO THE VIENNA CONVENTION. PHOUMI ANSWERED THAT PRIME MINISTER HAD TALKED TO DELEGATION OF THE DEMONSTRATORS AND ASSURED THEM THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS ENTERING INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE U.S. HOWEVER, THE YOUNG MEN DID NOT LISTEN; THEY WANTED A QUICK SETTLEMENT. THEY SAID THE 1951 AGREEMENT NO LONGER CONFORMED TO THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION AND THEY WANTED AID TO BE GIVEN DIRECTLY TO THE GOVERNMENT AND WITHOUT CONDITIONS. THIS ALSO WAS THE POSITION OF

THE GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER HAD INSTRUCTED SOTH AND SOUKAN TO CONTINUE TO TRY TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE OCCUPATION OF THE USAID COMPOUND. THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT NO FORCE SHOULD BE USED AGAINST THE POPULATION.

6. NEGOTIATIONS ON AID: THROUGHOUT ENTIRE HOUR LONG CONVERSATION PHOUMI RETURNED TO ONE PRINCIPAL THEME. HE WANTED TO SETTLE MAIN ISSUE FIRST AND IF THAT COULD BE DONE, ALL ELSE WOULD BE EASILY RESOLVED, HE SAID. IF GOVERNMENT CAN SAY USAID WILL BE DISSOLVED IT WILL BE ABLE TO CONVINCE DEMONSTRATORS TO LEAVE. WHAT THEY WERE SEEKING IS TO ISSUE A COMMUNIQUE THAT TWO GOVERNMENTS HAD REACHED AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON THE DISSOLUTION OF USAID. THIS WOULD CALM THE SITUATION. THE YOUNG PEOPLE, SAID PHOUMI, WANTED LAOS INDEPENDENT. PHOUMI WENT OVER ALL THE POINTS THAT HE MADE TO RAMSEY AND ME FOUR DAYS AGO; GOVERNMENT WANTED 1951 AGREEMENT MODIFIED (HE READ ME PASSAGES FROM "EXPERTS" REPORT ON THIS SUBJECT) AND DISSOLUTION OF USAID AS A SEPARATE ORGANIZATION. THEY HAD MADE THESE POINTS TO EVERYONE, HE SAID. THEY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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WANTED TO RECEIVE U.S. AID DIRECTLY AND HAVE U.S. EXPERTS WORKING WITH MINISTERS. IF WASHINGTON COULD AGREE TO NEGOTIATE IN PRINCIPLE ON THE DISSOLUTION OF USAID AND EXAMINATION OF THE 1951 AGREEMENT, THEN THE COMMISSION WHICH GOVERNMENT HAD SET UP COULD COME TO EMBASSY TO DISCUSS CONCRETELY ALL ISSUES. IF WE CANNOT ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE DISCUSSIONS OF THE TWO MAJOR POINTS, THEN THERE WAS NO PURPOSE IN THE COMMISSION MEETING WITH US ON DETAILS. I ANSWERED THAT MY GOVERNMENT FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO GIVE RESPONSE TO GENERALITIES. IT NEEDED CONCRETE PROPOSALS WHICH WE COULD CONSIDER. I POINTED OUT THAT WHILE WE HAD AN OPEN MIND, HE SHOULD REMEMBER, AS WE HAD TOLD HIM, THAT LEGISLATION REQUIRED OBSERVATION AND ACCOUNTING ON THE USE OF AID. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD, BUT THOUGHT AMERICAN EXPERTS IN MINISTRIES COULD DO THAT.

7. RADIO BROADCASTS: FINALLY, I EXPRESSED CONCERN AT INFLAMMATORY ANTI-AMERICAN TONE OF BROADCASTS BY LAO NATIONAL RADIO. I SAID THAT JUST BEFORE COMING I HAD BEEN TOLD OF ONE SUCH BROADCAST WHICH SAID THAT AT MID-NIGHT (AND I WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER IT WAS TONIGHT OR TOMORROW NIGHT) POLICE PROTECTION WOULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM AMERICANS. OUR CONVERSATION WAS INTERRUPTED BY MR. RAMSEY WHO CALLED TO SAY THAT THERE HAD BEEN A BROADCAST THREATENING THE LIFE OF FIRST SECRETARY DAN ARNOLD. PHOUMI ANSWERED THAT HE COULD NOT BELIEVE THIS. THERE WERE NO BROADCASTS OVER LAO NATIONAL RADIO AT THIS TIME. PHOUMI SAID HE LISTENED TO THE RADIO BUT HAD HEARD NO

SPECIFICALLY ANTI-AMERICAN BROADCAST. HE HAD HEARD DECLARATIONS BY INDIVIDUAL TROOP UNITS EXPRESSING THEIR LOYALTY TO THE GOVERNMENT. I ANSWERED THAT I WOULD TRY TO GET SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF SUCH BROADCASTS TO HIM. I SIMPLY NOTED THAT IN THIS ATMOSPHERE, ENCITEMENT AGAINST AMERICANS COULD WELL LEAD CERTAIN EXTREMISTS, WHO EXIST IN ALL SOCIETIES, TO COMMIT ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST AMERICANS AND THEREFORE I THOUGHT SUCH BROADCASTS MOST DANGEROUS.

8. ON MY RETURN TO THE EMBASSY, I CALLED SOTH PHETRASY TO ASCERTAIN WHAT HE WAS DOING REGARDING SETTLING THE USAID COMPOUND OCCUPATION. SOTH WENT OVER VERY MUCH THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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SAME GROUND AS PHOUMI, EMPHASIZING THAT THE GOVERNMENT WANTS THE U.S. TO ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE THE TOTAL DISSOLUTION OF USAID. THE DEMONSTRATORS WHO HAD MET WITH THE PRIME MINISTER HAD INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD BE SATISFIED BY SUCH A GESTURE AND OFFERED TO EXTEND THEIR DEADLINE ON COMPLETION OF NEGOTIATIONS TO ONE MONTH FROM THE ORIGINAL THREE DAYS BUT, SAID SOTH, THEY WERE VERY FIRM ON THIS POINT. NOW SOTH DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO. HE HOPED THAT SOME COMPROMISE COULD BE FOUND WITH THE U.S. ON THIS ISSUE. TO PHOUMI AND SOTH ON THIS QUESTION OF AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE I INDICATED THAT I HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS AND THOUGHT THAT WASHINGTON WAS FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO TAKE A POSITION OF PRINCIPLE WHEN WE HAD NO CONCRETE PROPOSALS FROM THE PGNU. I THEREFORE SUGGESTED THAT THE PGNU SHOULD GIVE US MORE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS ON THE MODIFICATION OF THE 1951 AGREEMENT AND ON THE MANNER IN WHICH AID COULD BE PROVIDED IN ORDER TO HELP WASHINGTON MAKE A DECISION.

9. COMMENT: THESE CONVERSATIONS CONFIRM IN SPADE THE COUNTRY TEAM'S JUDGEMENT THAT UNTIL WE EXPRESS OUR WILLINGNESS IN PRINCIPLE TO CONSIDER THE DISSOLUTION OF USAID AS AN ORGANIZATION AND REEXAMINE THE 1951 AGREEMENT, WE HAVE REACHED AN IMPASSE. IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT IF WASHINGTON AGREES WITH THIS POSITION, IT MAY NOW APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN UNDER DURESS. CHAPMAN

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